AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 35. (Canceled)

36. (Currently Amended) A method of increasing the salt tolerance of a plant in need thereof, comprising increasing the expression of a polynucleotide encoding a ~~SOS1 protein~~ a polypeptide that is at least 95% identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2, wherein said ~~SOS1 protein~~ polypeptide has Na^+/H^+ transporter activity, in said plant as compared to the expression of said polynucleotide in the wild-type of said plant, and wherein said increasing the expression is by either increasing the copy number of said polynucleotide as compared to the wild-type plant or by replacing the native promoter of said polynucleotide with a stronger promoter.

37. – 42 (Canceled)

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein said polynucleotide comprises a sequence that is at least 70% identical to the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein said polynucleotide comprises a sequence that is at least 80% identical to the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein said polynucleotide comprises a sequence that is at least 90% identical to the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein said polynucleotide comprises the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

47. – 50. (Canceled)

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein said polynucleotide encodes the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 2.

52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein said plaint is Arabidopsis thalania.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein said plant is selected from the group consisting of wheat, corn, peanut cotton, oat, and soybean plant.

54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein said increasing the expression comprises increasing the copy number of said polynucleotide as compared to the wild-type plant.

55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein said increasing the expression comprises replacing the native promoter of said polynucleotide with a stronger promoter.

56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein said plant is a monocotyledonous plant.

57. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein said plant is a dicotyledonous plant.

58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein said increasing the expression is in a plant organ.

59. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 36~~ claim 58, wherein said plant organ is selected from the group consisting of leaves, the stem, and the roots.

60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein said increasing the expression is in the whole plant.

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein said increasing the expression is in the seeds of said plant.